UNITED
NATIONS

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Security Council

Distr.
GENERAL

S/1994/834
18 July 1994
ENGLISH
ORIGINAL: FRENCH

LETTER DATED 17 JULY 1994 FROM THE CHARGE D'AFFAIRES A.I.
OF THE PERMANENT MISSION OF FRANCE TO THE UNITED NATIONS
ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

The French Government has asked me to inform you urgently of the deterioration of the situation in Rwanda and in the area near Goma, where the humanitarian aid operation for the Rwandese refugee population is based.

As you are aware, artillery bombardments coming from the east and, therefore, from Rwanda and probably conducted by forces of the Rwandese Patriotic Front (RPF), were directed today at the village of Goma. These bombardments have already left some 60 civilians dead and many wounded, particularly in the airport zone. The humanitarian lifeline from the Goma airport established by the United Nations with the assistance of French forces had to be immediately suspended. The refugee population, whose situation was already tragic, is even more directly threatened today.

The French Government condemns these bombardments, which are directed at the refugee population and are impeding humanitarian operations established by the international community in response to a tragedy of immense proportions. It calls once again for the immediate implementation of the cease-fire ordered by the Security Council.

I must also inform you that armed RPF elements attempted this afternoon to enter the humanitarian safe area established in south-west Rwanda. An encounter ensued with the French forces responsible for ensuring that the humanitarian character of this area is respected.

The French Government will of course ensure that this character is respected and French forces will, as announced from the outset, continue to oppose the entry of all armed persons, no matter what their origin, into the humanitarian safe area, where all military activity is by nature prohibited.

I should be grateful if you would bring this information to the attention of the Security Council by transmitting this letter to it as a document of the Council.

(Signed) Hervé LADSOUS
Chargé d'affaires a.i.

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